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Hic et Nunc. Global Migration and *Haeceitas*

“With its long tradition based on the Christian hierarchy of values, research potential, creative inventiveness, and educational enthusiasm, the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin fits into the scientific and socio-cultural landscape of the country and continues to build a shared reality.”

1. Haeceitas

The above quoted words are taken from the bi-lingual welcome brochure of the Catholic University of Lublin. They encapsulate the idea of globalization and *heaceitas*, of the totality of the human home and the down to earth ‘this-ness’ of man’s existence in this home.

The globalization is found in the first words and the last words, ‘long tradition based on the Christian hierarchy of values’ and ‘continues to build a shared reality’. Christianity teaches the love of God for all men and the love of all men for each other. On no other basis than love is globalization possible. On no other basis, indeed, is globalization ever actual. From the dawn of history men and nations have been in contact and exchange, but when the contact and exchange was hostile the result was division and fragmentation, oppression and exploitation. Even so sharing took place: the conquerors and oppressors could not avoid all exchange and borrowing from the conquered and oppressed. Love, however, rather than hatred would have made the ex-

change and borrowing immensely more beautiful and beneficial. The ‘shared reality’ would have been a full and free participation and not a stunted and resentful dependence.

The *haecitas*, on the other hand, the here and now ‘this-ness’ of actual existing, is found in the simple fact of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. For the university is a particular entity marked as such by a particular place and time: the place of Lublin and the time of and after John Paul II. This particular university is also described as fitting “into the scientific and socio-cultural landscape of the country,” that is, as being defined even in its intellectual existence, to say nothing of its material and geographical existence, by place and time.

These opening words tell us quite emphatically that mankind is at the same time one and different: one in global participation, different in the where and when of the participation.

2. Global Migration

Turning, then, to the where and when of globalization today, we face, in our present here and now, the question of mass immigration. Why are so many people now immigrating? Or more precisely, for what and whither are they immigrating, and from what and whence are they immigrating? Generally, we may say, they are immigrating *for* a better life (however undefined the idea of ‘better’ may be) and *to* a place, Europe or the United States, where they suppose a better life to exist. They are immigrating, by contrast, *from* a worse life or even indeed an intolerable life, notably from the Middle East and parts of Africa and South and Central America. Life in these places has become intolerable not because of natural disasters, or not primarily, but because of the actions of other countries, especially the United States and Europe, in the so-called war on terrorism or against the lingering remains of communism.

War can in principle be just and justly carried out, but the conditions are strict. John Paul II said as much several times during his pon-

tificate, but he also said, and more emphatically, that even just wars often cause more harm in the end than they remove or were meant to remove. John Paul II's views here are complex and deserve a treatment by themselves,¹ but they seem correct about the effects of war in modern times and especially about the war on terrorism. The situation in Iraq, Afghanistan, and latterly Libya and Syria, has not been improved but made considerably worse by the recent interventions of Western powers. One might say similar things about the actions of these powers in Africa and about the actions of the United States in Mexico. The facts are hard to weigh and properly to penetrate (many of the details have been kept hidden by the governments involved). The visible results nevertheless are clear, namely the present, massive increase of immigration from the Middle East and North Africa into Europe, and from Mexico and South America into the United States.

There are other causes too, which are internal to Europe and the United States. Perhaps the chief of them is the decline of religion in First World nations and the consequent emptiness of heart, or what Mother Teresa of Calcutta would describe as spiritual poverty. Such poverty is a worse poverty than the material poverty that her religious order was founded to relieve. First World countries have become practical apostates from their ancestral Christian piety and have, largely as a result, suffered a prolonged decline in population as well as in morals. Fine houses are built but not fine families, increase of wealth is pursued but not increase of children, enjoyment of physical pleasures is embraced but not enjoyment of moral nobility. Nations can give up reproducing themselves if they wish, but they cannot at the same time expect that the resulting void will not be filled from somewhere else. Nor can they expect that empty hearts will not ache or will not engage in self-destructive egoisms in a vain attempt to escape the pain.

¹ An attempt at such a treatment can be found in my 'Transcending Justice. Pope John Paul II and Just War.' *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 39 (2011): 286-298, and also in my *Political Illiberalism* (Transaction, 2015), chapter 9.

Herein however lies a paradox. Western countries became desirable and prosperous places to be, and so places attractive to immigrants, because of traditional practices and achievements. For it was traditions of hard work and of the free employment of human ingenuity and enterprise that made Western countries desirable and prosperous. But the traditions have atrophied, if they have not in some places been outright abandoned. Without these traditions, especially in sound morals and Christian piety, the achievements will be lost. They are already being lost. The consequence is that the immigrants coming to the West to enjoy the achievements of the West are coming to achievements that are already collapsing. The immigrants are coming, that is, to a place where, in the not too distant future, there will be no reason for immigrants to come. There will be nothing worth coming for.

The way the immigration is happening, or being allowed to happen, is also destructive. Fine phrases are being used by Western politicians and pundits to justify the open immigration policy, the phrases of human equality and rights. These phrases are specious because there is nothing solid in them. They are, as actually used, empty slogans whose meaning is so unspecific, and deliberately left so unspecific, that they can in practice be put to justify almost any policy, charitable, naïve, or sinister. The phrases nevertheless do have a sound meaning and a legitimate use, and we can again appeal to John Paul II to be our guide. Appeals to equality and rights have truth and are just only as founded on human dignity, and human dignity is above all the dignity of the person. A person is essentially a being that is free, or a self-determining cause of his own lived existence. A free being is something or someone that knows and acts on the truth. Freedom and truth are inseparable, for freedom and self-determination require that there be something to choose and something to determine oneself for. This something can only be the good, for the good is the universal name for what is worth choosing and worth imitating and worth admiring. A thing does not become good because we choose it; we come to choose it because it is good. Or rather we come to choose it because we judge it to be good. To judge something to be good is to judge it

to be truly the good it is judged to be. Freedom does not want to be deceived; it wants the truth, the truth about the good.

People may think, or at least be persuaded by psychological propaganda to think, that whatever they judge to be good is good for them. But very little experience is needed to show that the judgment is false. Legion are the people who got what they wanted and did not find it good, or not the good they wanted. The sensible reaction would be to admit that the good is not whatever we judge it to be but something we must seek out the truth of. In practice, and because of the psychological propaganda, the reaction is different: the good we first wanted is still judged to be the good we want but its failure to satisfy is blamed on outside forces that cheated and tricked us. The passion for the good originally wanted, instead of forcing us, by its failure of satisfaction, to recognize our fallibility and our need first to develop wisdom and moderation, grows not only stronger but angrier and more violent. Global immigration displays all these features: a passion for a good denied at home, a rush to get to a place where the good is believed to be, anger and violence not only in the attempt to get to that place but also in the reaction (from immigrants and natives) after the place is reached and the good sought for either is not found or does not satisfy.

3. Truth and Freedom and Faith – the Global in the Here and Now

Such reflections about truth and goodness and freedom in general and about current immigration in particular are simple and elementary, but what they tell us about choice and about global immigration is ignored or denied, especially in the First World. The one truth we now all know for sure and that indeed we are taught from earliest days at school, is that the truth is what we say and the good is what we choose, and that if anyone dares to say or think otherwise he is evil and wicked. The paradox is blatant. It is ‘true,’ we say, that ‘the truth is what we say.’ It is ‘good,’ we say, that ‘the good is what we choose.’

To say anything else is 'false' and 'bad.' We refute ourselves in our very speaking.

The sophist, perhaps, will dismiss this paradox as mere word-play, a logical puzzle to amuse those who live in ivory towers. Would indeed it were so. In fact the paradox has escaped the ivory towers and roars like a lion through the First World 'seeking whom to devour'. The true is what you make it to be, roars the lion, 'the good is what you choose it to be. But what do we make, and what do we choose? It all depends on who we are. A child, we say, thinks and chooses childish things. Of course. What else could a child think and choose? It thinks and chooses as it is. So do we all. What then are we? The paradox makes it clear: it has cut thought and choice loose from reason and truth. Remove reason and truth from human thought and action, and all that is left is passion, the passion that moves us as the senses move them. The cruder, then, the external influences that move the senses and excite the passions, the cruder the thoughts and the choices. The results are not hard to predict or, now, hard to observe.

In a sense it was always so. We all start as children, as creatures of immediate impressions and feelings, and we all start behaving and loving impulsively as children. Nothing more can be expected of children; indeed the simple nothings of childish ways are even enjoyable; they charm us with their careless innocence. But we expect children to grow up and to become progressively maturer in what they think and what they want. Children grow up under the loving but forceful discipline of parents and teachers. They will, however, stay as children, feeling and loving childish things (however adult the outward form of these things may sometimes appear), unless they are educated out of them. The great human struggle is to civilize the child into the man. We call civilizations civilizations precisely because they are concrete examples of how different peoples have civilized their children into men. Western civilization now, because of the paradox, aims only to civilize children into children: what we did childishly as children we now do consciously and of set purpose as men. Our passions, whatever they are, are good and true because we say and choose so.

Time was when Western civilization, and world civilization, was founded on something else. ‘Whom resist,’ said the old civilization in response to the roaring lion, ‘strong in faith’ (*I Peter* 5.8-9). What faith? The Christian, the Catholic faith. The essence of that faith is the true and the good, and the true and good not in some abstract philosophical speculation fit for ivory towers, but bodily and concretely in ordinary lives. The faith has faded in the First World, but it is not dead. It cannot die, at least not in itself, for it is divine in itself. But it can die in us. It can die especially in the First World where once it lived. How does faith, how does truth, how does goodness not die but live? By being believed and loved, by being said and done.

Let us then, who still hold to the faith, believe and say it, love and do it – in this very now, in the very *haeceitas* of the where and when of what we are. The thing is not so hard. Take the global immigration the First World now faces. What is the truth and goodness that faith says about immigrants? ‘Welcome the stranger. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked.’ ‘What you did to the least of these my brethren, you did to me.’ ‘Love one another as I have loved you’ (*Matthew* 24, *John* 13).

Immigrants of all kinds have equality as human beings and have rights as human beings: the equality and the right to be welcomed and cared for, but the equality and the right as well to be so welcomed and cared for in the name of Christ. Immigrants are newcomers in a foreign country. Do they not have a right to know what country they are in and with what persons they are going to live and among what traditions they will now spend their days? Indeed they do. They have therefore a right to be welcomed in the name of Christ. If they are not welcomed in the name of Christ their right, their dignity, their equality is being denied.

What does it matter that the immigrant has another faith and other traditions? He has come to this faith and these traditions. Has he not a right to know both? Has he not a right to know both as they truly are? But the Christian, the Catholic, faith is nothing without charity. The immigrant is not truthfully welcomed if he is not welcomed in the name of Christ and loved in the name of Christ.

Here is the *haeceitas* and globalization of this essay. The *haeceitas* is the First World now; the immigration is the globalization now. The *haeceitas* is what the First World essentially is now, and the globalization is what the immigrant essentially is now. The *haeceitas* cannot be the paradox mentioned earlier. A paradox is not and cannot be the essence of anything. The faith, by contrast, can be, especially when the faith in concrete persons defies the paradox and asserts boldly both the true and the good. The immigrant, too, however global in his different origins, is not an amorphous other nor are his rights and his dignity empty sounds. They are universal realities that all men share because they are all men. The immigrant is a stranger at the gate who, because he is a man like all men, is an image of the suffering Christ – this Christ, the true Christ, whose revealed presence is the authentic form of the First World, for it is the form that made the First World. The immigrant is to be welcomed by the First world expressly in its form as First World, in the name of Christ and as Christ.

The *haeceitas* of present immigration is evangelization, global evangelization. Not evangelization to a globe far away that must be traveled to, as the ancient missionaries once did, but to a globe that has arrived on our doorstep and must be cared for on our doorstep. Cared for, indeed, not just with food and clothing and shelter, but above all and primarily with truth, the truth about the faith that teaches the feeding and clothing and sheltering.

‘Be strong in faith.’ Be strong: that is, be confident, assured, open in asserting what and who we are. In faith: that is, in the firm conviction of eternal truth and eternal goodness. The thing is already being done, for already there are reports of large numbers of immigrants wanting to become and actually becoming Christians. In their own countries (for many are Muslim), conversion is forbidden on pain of punishment or death. Here where they are immigrants conversion is free and untrammelled. Let us then be true to what we are here: Christian and Catholic. We have but to speak. The roaring lion is no threat. ‘Whom resist strong in faith,’ because, after all, the Incarnate God will slay him ‘with the breath of his mouth’ (*II Thessalonians* 2.8),

the mouth that speaks truth and goodness to all the world – the global *haeceitas* of the Gospel, of the God made man. Hic et nunc.

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Summary

According to the Author the *haeceitas* of present immigration is evangelization, global evangelization. He points out that not evangelization to a globe far away that must be traveled to, as the ancient missionaries once did, but to a globe that has arrived on our doorstep and must be cared for on our doorstep. Cared for, indeed, not just with food and clothing and shelter, but above all and primarily with truth, the truth about the faith that teaches the feeding and clothing and sheltering.

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